

ACP Group Set to Negotiate as One in the new Modern Post Cotonou Agreement

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The 107th Session of the ACP Council of Ministers will be held in Lome, Togo from 29th to 30th May 2018 under the Presidency of Jamaica, at a very crucial time of the ACP-EU Relations. This meeting remains an important milestone towards opening negotiations with the countries of the Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and the European Union (EU). Seventy-nine countries from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific will speak with one voice as they prepare to adopt a negotiating mandate between the ACP and the EU post-Cotonou Agreement.

Preceding this Session of the ACP Council of Ministers is a special session of ACP Council of Ministers convened on 27th May 2018 and dedicated to Post Cotonou Negotiations. Leading up to the launch of negotiations for the post-Cotonou period in 2018, there is a clear common interest in aligning future ACP-EU cooperation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Apart from the discussions on the future of the ACP Group and its relations with the European Union, the 107th Session of the ACP Council of Ministers will address strategic matters such as repositioning the ACP group as a more effective global player in order to respond better to the needs and aspirations of its ACP Member States. Ministers will also address ways of leveraging the principles of complementarity and subsidiarity between the ACP Group and the Regional and Continental organisations, sustaining financing of the group and lastly advancing the climate change agenda in a repositioned ACP Group.

Central to the discussions in Lome is the revision of the Georgetown agreement, amendments would include:- examination of provisions such as the Preamble of the Agreement, the criteria and categories of membership in the organisation, giving close attention to the call of ACP Heads of State and Government at their Seventh Summit in 2012 for "contacts and relations with other States and groups of States" to feature prominently.

Other key items on the agenda include commodities & trade issues, sustainable economic development, and development finance.

In the margins of the 107th Session of the ACP Council of Ministers, on 26th May 2018 an inter agency consultation will be held with the Continental and Regional organisations, such as the African Union Commission (AUC), CARICOM, Pacific Island Forum (PIF). The ACP Group recognises the important and active role played by the regional and continental organisations and calls for need to preserve and built upon such collaboration in a post-Cotonou Agreement. The focus of the meeting will be to ensure the contributions of the RECS and RIOS into the ACPs Group Negotiating Framework for a post-Cotonou Agreement.

The ACP Council of Ministers is the main decision-making body of the ACP Group under the Summit of Heads of State and Government.

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